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Ocean for Life: Enhancing Cultural Understanding Through Ocean Science

Students from the Greater Middle East and Western countries document field studies within National Marine Sanctuaries

Sixty high school students from Greater Middle Eastern and Western countries will participate in *Ocean for Life*, an initiative to increase cultural understanding through ocean science, from July 15 to August 9, 2009. NOAA's National Marine Sanctuaries in Florida and California will host the students during their field study, and the students will also participate in a three-day visit to Washington, D.C. *Ocean for Life* is made possible by a partnership of U.S. Government agencies and private entities.

The themes of *Ocean for Life* are: a sense of place, interconnectedness and ocean conservation and stewardship. Students will explore the ocean and coastal areas in NOAA's Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary or in California at the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries. Participants will learn about research and conservation activities being conducted to address the issues threatening ocean health and to protect resources. Field studies will

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Enhancing Cultural Understanding through Ocean Science

www.oceanforlife.org

Ocean for Life

be used to raise awareness of the importance of resources in the ocean, and students will draw comparisons with their own unique local and regional environments.

Assisted by *National Geographic* photographers and American University film students, the participants will document what they have learned through the development of “youth media projects,” using photography and video to capture the essence of their surroundings. The youth media projects will become a tool to help *Ocean for Life* participants share what they have learned and promote ocean conservation and cultural understanding among their classmates, friends, families and communities back home.

The field study in Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will take place July 15 through July 25, and will bring together students from Armenia, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Lebanon, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, and the U.S. Students from Bahrain, Canada, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. will participate in the field study at the Cordell Bank, Gulf of the Farallones, and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuaries in California from July 30 through August 9. In between field studies, all students will meet in Washington, D.C., July 26 through 29.

The *Ocean for Life* program is a partnership between NOAA’s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, the GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) Program, and SCUBAnauts International. It is presented in collaboration with the National Geographic Society, American University’s Center for Environmental Filmmaking, the Meridian International Center, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation, Camp S.E.A. Lab and MarineLab. Other supporters include NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), Headlands Institute and the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association. Sponsors and donors include the EllMar Foundation, Able Body Labor, Pro Dive, and Aqua Lung. The U.S. Department of State has provided diplomatic and consular support for *Ocean for Life*, and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies provided consultation support.

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